What is claimed is:

1.   A method of allowing access to functionality of a consumer device comprising the steps:

receiving bio-metric input of a first user into a bio-metric user-identification input

5   component of a controller;

establishing a current system state of the controller related to a previous system state of

the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the controller by the first user and before a

use of the controller by a second user; and

providing access to functionality of a consumer device by use of the controller;

10   wherein said access is dependent upon the bio-metric input;

wherein said use of the controller by the second user caused the controller to have a

system state different than the previous system state.

2.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the bio-metric user-identification input

component is a fingerprint pad.

15   3.   The method of Claim 2, wherein the controller is a hand-held controller.

4.   The method of Claim 3, wherein the controller comprises a display area, and

further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data representing available

functions to be executed.

5.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the bio-metric user-identification input

20   component is a microphone.

6.   The method of Claim 5, wherein the bio-metric input is voice data, and wherein

the voice date is received after the controller enters a temporary system state in response to a

request to process the voice data.

7.   The method of Claim 5, wherein the controller is a hand-held controller.

8.   The method of Claim 7, wherein the controller comprises a display area, and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data representing available functions to be executed.

5   9.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the consumer device is a television.

10.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the consumer device is a set-top box.

11.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the controller comprises a display area, and further comprising the step of displaying on the display area data representing the current system state.

10   12.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the controller comprises a plurality of physical actuating buttons.

13.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state is substantially identical to the previous system state.

14.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state is identical to the previous system state.

15   15.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state prevents use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

16.   The method of Claim 1, wherein the current system state allows use of the controller for conducting e-commerce transactions via the Internet.

20   17.   A controller for controlling access to a consumer device comprising:

a bio-metric input component; and

a graphical display;

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wherein the controller, upon log-on thereto by a first user, is programmed to enter a current system state related to a previous system state of the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the controller by the first user and before a use of the controller by a second user, both uses occurring before said log-on;

5   wherein said log-on occurs in response to the first user inputting bio-metric input into the bio-metric input component.

18.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the bio-metric input component is a fingerprint pad, and the bio-metric input comprises a fingerprint pattern.

19.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the bio-metric input component is a

10   microphone, and the bio-metric input comprises voice data.

20.   The controller of Claim 17 wherein the controller is a hand-held controller.

21.   The controller of Claim 17, further comprising a plurality of physical actuating buttons.

22.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the current system state is substantially

15   identical to the previous system state.

23.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the controller is programmed to display a representation of the current system state on the display.

24.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the current system state prevents use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

20   25.   The controller of Claim 17, wherein the bio-metric input component is connected to the controller via a port on the controller.

26.   The controller of Claim 17, in combination with a database of known users of the controller stored externally to the controller on a separate storage device.

27.   A method of controlling multi-user access to functionality of a consumer device comprising the steps:

determining an identity of a first user in response to bio-metric input supplied by the first user to a controller;

5   establishing a first system state of the controller, said first system state being associated with said identity;

providing access to a first set of functionality of a consumer device by use of the controller, said access being dependent upon the identity of the first user; and

switching to a second system state from the first system state at a time calculated by an

10   algorithm which incorporates at least one factor other than the passage of a certain amount of time.

28.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state prevents use of the controller for accessing pay-per-view programming.

29.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state allows use of the

15   controller for conducting eCommerce transactions via the Internet.

30.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state causes a banner ad program to execute and display a banner ad on a display associated with the controller.

31.   The method of Claim 30, wherein the display is on the controller.

32.   The method of Claim 27 wherein the consumer device is a set-top box.

20   33.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is the identity of the first user.

34.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is a category of use associated with the consumer device.

35.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the at least one factor is a subject matter of activity within a category of use associated with the consumer device.

36.   The method of Claim 27 wherein the second system state is associated with a second set of functionality different than the first set of functionality.

5   37.   The method of Claim 27, wherein the second system state is associated with an identity of a second user.

38.   A method of controlling multi-user access to functionality of a consumer device comprising the steps:

determining an identity of a first user in response to bio-metric input supplied by the first

10   user to a controller;

establishing a first system state of the controller, said first system state being associated with said identity;

providing access to a first set of functionality of a consumer device by use of the controller, said access being dependent upon the identity of the first user; and

15   switching to a second system state from the first system state in response to a predetermined amount of time passing after establishing the first system state, said second system state being related to a previous system state of the controller that was in effect after a previous use of the controller by a second user which occurred prior to establishing the first system state.

20   39.   The method of Claim 38, wherein the second system state is substantially identical to the previous system state.

40.   The method of Claim 38, wherein the second system state is a default system state.

41.   The method of Claim 38, wherein the predetermined amount of time is calculated by an algorithm which incorporates at least one factor other than the passage of a certain amount of time.

42.   The method of Claim 41, wherein the other factor is the identity of the first user.

5   43.   The method of Claim 41, wherein the at least one factor is a category of use associated with the consumer device.

44.   The method of Claim 41, wherein the at least one factor is a subject matter of activity with a category of activity associated with the consumer device.